



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Gary Christensen Named Planning and Community Development Director**

**Bainbridge Island, Wash.,** (March, 2016) City Manager Doug Schulze has announced that Gary Christensen has been chosen as Bainbridge Island's new Planning and Community Development Director. Christensen is expected to begin his new role in April.

The City selected Strategic Government Resources (SGR), an executive search, interim placement, and training firm based in Keller, Texas, to conduct a nationwide search to find the most highly qualified person to fill the role. This was a highly competitive process, with the top four finalists being interviewed and thoroughly vetted to determine the best fit for the City. Christensen was the top choice from a pool of 40 candidates from 15 states and Canada.

Christensen is an AICP certified planner with 29 years of local government experience. He is currently the Administrator/Manager of the Skagit County Planning and Development Services Department, where he has also served as Director, Administrative Official, SEPA Responsible Official, and Shoreline Administrator during his 27 year career there. Christensen began his professional planning career in Klickitat County, where among many projects he worked on, was the early legislation and local government requirements of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area.

A graduate of Washington State University with a Master's degree in Regional Planning, Christensen also holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Land Resources from Montana State University, with an emphasis in Landscape Design. He is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners, the American Planning Association, and the Planning Association of Washington. Christensen brings a wealth of planning knowledge and experience to Bainbridge Island and currently serves as a mayoral appointed member of the City of Anacortes Community Advisory Committee, tasked with updating the city's comprehensive plan; and as an appointed member of the Puget Sound Partnership and Washington State Conservation Commission Ag Incentives Committee. He is currently President of the Washington State Association of County and Regional Planning Directors.

A frequent speaker and presenter at planning conferences, Christensen has written several professional planning articles and columns that have been published. Under his leadership, Skagit County has won the Washington State Governor's Smart Communities Award in 2012

and 2010, and the Washington State Governor's Office Regulatory Reform Best Practices Award in 2008.

Schulze said, "We are extremely fortunate to have Gary join the City of Bainbridge Island as our new Planning and Community Development Director. Gary's extensive knowledge, experience, and proven leadership skills will be instrumental as we complete the comprehensive plan update, and streamline and enhance our planning and development processes to take them to the next level."

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